

# Photoplays and Notes of the Stage

## High Lights and Shadows on the News of Pictures

### Hollywood Has Finally Awakened From Long Sleep and Production Booms

By FRANK VREELAND.

HOLLYWOOD has finally awakened from its long sleep, and is doing the business of acting like a Phoenix that has just risen from the ash can, with speed and vivacity. Production, to put it simply in words of three syllables, is in the ascendant. John C. Flinn, who bears with ease the weight of an important executive position with the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, which includes the supervision of Paramount theaters throughout the country, says that film making is once more almost in full bloom amid the eucalyptus and the cactus. And who should know better than Flinn?

He says that production has lately improved about 25 per cent. in Los Angeles and that in the big studios activities are virtually back at normal, which makes the sun shine again with true Californian brilliancy for many confirmed Hollywood residents. Both the Lasky studio and the Universal are running at capacity, the former having thirteen companies seething with emotion on the lot.

The Goldwyn studio, which has been closed for some time, has reopened and is running at about half speed, though it is expected to be going at full tilt soon, especially when "Ben-Hur" starts tearing up the ground. The various units of First National are showing signs of life to the same degree. Metro, which was in a coma for some time, is likewise coming to.

While production among the large companies generally has not reached the notch attained in the feverish days right after the war, it is regarded as close to normal, since in those days every one except head walkers was finding it profitable to work in the movies. But though the distilling of pictures is once more encouraging, the bulk of production is only half what it was back in the era when Hollywood simply dripped pictures instead of sweat. This is due to the disappearance of the small independent producer, who is no longer able to lay violent hands on the coin offered him by unsuspecting laymen who thought they saw in the movies a chance to make a fortune without straining their gray matter.

The independents, adding to the standard program pictures made by the big companies, made a total of sixteen new features a week, from which the exhibitors could choose those that would best add to the thoughts of his patrons. Now, Flinn says, only eight new features are being made each week. The big studios, on the other hand, are setting the market again weekly. Some of the thrill manufacturers, also, among them Goldwyn and First National, have cut down their list of pictures by half, promising to make up for this by laying on the quality thick. Universal and Paramount will provide about as large a number of features as last year, but later organization dropping no fewer than ninety pictures into the hungry maw of the public.

The boost in work out West has been brought about by a reawakening of appetite on the part of the public. Exhibitors everywhere, Flinn says, are making large bookings, evidently banking on the prospect of a boom in business this year because the public seems to be once more cognizant of the fact that a nickelodeon theater is a good place to go to after smashing the crockery for supper. Feature pictures are at a premium, and photoplays by Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford and Charles Ray are snapped up—whereas even these titans trembled on their thrones a year ago.

Business is coming back gratifyingly everywhere throughout the country, except in the middle West, which is just getting its breath after a month and a half of asbestos scorching weather. Flinn attributes the big jump in attendance in New York city not only to the pleasant weather but chiefly to the exhibition of exceptional features in the summer which ordinarily would not have been uncoiled until the winter. This has fastened the grip of the movie habit on the American people once more. Thus momentum of interest in engendered one week by a striking feature which draws \$15,000 to \$20,000 more for the week than usual, and that very momentum carries the patrons to the film palace the following week to see a mediocre photoplay which thereby finds \$5,000 more sticking to it than is customary.

The impending merger between First National and Goldwyn, which seemed to have only a half's breadth separating it from consummation, finally fell through. It is reported, however, that the participants couldn't sing close harmony with regard to the details of production. Now that the deal has come to naught, the Capitol seems likely to come under the Paramount influence in part, securing purchased for early presentation two Paramount pictures, "The Old Homestead," with Theodore Roberts, and "To Have and to Hold," and is said to have sold several million German marks for the same. "To Have and to Hold" is one of those carbon copies of an earlier screen success which are now advertising that the story shortage is as bad as a fuel shortage.

Several years ago Wallace Reed knit his brows and fanned the air with a sword in a screen version of Mary Johnston's famous romance. The latest version has been directed by George Fitzmaurice, with Betty Compson as the object of possession and Bert Lytell strapping out of the customary evening clothes to ruffle it. Theodore Kosloff will play the Duke of Buckingham, and despite the semi-real character of his role he will not doubt find an opportunity to fling knives about in his favorite fashion.

The reported scorching of the pretty features of Miss Anne Q. Nilsson in a forest fire emphasizes again the fact that this winsome foreign actress, though no one would imagine it to look at her pink tea continuance. Once, while living abroad and with nothing but about \$1.35 standing between her and being broke, she engaged in a card game with wealthy friends who were making bids in France or plasters or dubiousness of something. Miss Nilsson thought that every time they said "five" she was bidding in low figures, so she plunged into it and bid herself right up to the extravagant limit of \$1.15. Then to her horror she discovered that her



MISS PEGGY SHAW, IN "A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM," LYRIC THEATRE.

HAROLD LLOYD, IN "GRANDMA'S BOY," STRAND THEATRE.



MRS. IRENE CASTLE AND ROD LA ROCQUE, IN "SLIM SHOULDERS," CAPITOL.

MISS WANDA HAWLEY, IN "BURNING SANDS," RIVOLI THEATRE.

MISS VIRGINIA B. FAIRE, IN "MONTE CRISTO," 44th STREET THEATRE.

### Feature Photoplays to Be Seen This Week

**ASTOR**—"The Prisoner of Zenda," Rex Ingram's production, with Alnos Terry and Lewis Stone.

**CAMEO**—Wallace Reid in "Nice People."

**CAPITOL**—Mrs. Irene Castle in "Slim Shoulders."

**CRITERION**—Owen Moore in "Love Is an Awful Thing."

**FORTY-FOURTH STREET**—"Monte Cristo," Fox adaptation of Alexandre Dumas's story, with John Gilbert.

**LYRIC**—Fox production, "A Little Child Shall Lead Them."

**RIALTO**—Miss Marion Davies in "The Young Diana" and a Chaplin revival, "The Pawnshop."

**RIVOLI**—"Burning Sands," George Melford production, with Wanda Hawley and Milton Sills, and Larry Semon in "Golf."

**STRAND**—Harold Lloyd in "Grandma's Boy."

**SHERIDAN**—Betty Compson in "The Bonded Woman," first half of week; Wallace Reid in "The Dictator," second half.

as his organ solo, and Ralph S. Brainard will alternate.

The Rialto program will open with the overture from Massenet's "Phaëte," played by the orchestra under the direction of Hugo Reisenfeld and Joseph Littau. "Spring, a Fantasy," with a special setting by Urban, will introduce the feature film, with Miss Lillian Powell and Miss Martha Mason in a dance number. Misses Miriam Lex, soprano, and Susan Lila Clough, mezzo soprano, will sing Arthur Penn's "Sunrise and You," especially arranged for this presentation by Joseph Zuro.

### Working for Laughs Has Its Compensations

Bernard Gorcey hasn't been too busy playing the little Hebrew lawyer in Anne Nichols's comedy "Abie's Irish Rose," at the Republic Theatre, to notice audiences and their idiosyncrasies the other day. Gorcey said: "It is peculiar to observe how little changes in mannerisms or scenes will change the spectators. When the picture first opened in Atlantic City the curtain rose on me, sitting on a sofa reading a comic supplement and laughing at it. My face was in full view of the audience. While the audience greeted this with giggles it wasn't what Miss Anne Nichols, the author, was after. She knew this bit had the essence of a big laughing scene."

"At rehearsal the next day she suggested that I keep my face covered with the paper and to play the scene just as before. That night we tried it. The result? The audience roared. "As a general rule audiences are most sympathetic and indulgent. Occasionally we encounter people who come to the theater not to be entertained but to be shown. A chip is always on their shoulders. With arms folded they sit in their seats; their faces immobile. "A few nights after this play opened at the Fulton Theatre one of those

### Dancer Gives Secret Of Dancing Well

Miss Mary Haun of the dancing team of Haun and Sedano, appearing in Arthur Hammerstein's musical comedy, "Daddy Dill," at the Apollo, believes that if artists dance successfully with faces and hands they will not have to bother about their feet. She finds that the secret of dancing is rhythm and a perfect response to time and tempo. Yet a mastery of these technical matters is not sufficient. There must be intelligence in dancing, she holds, and there must be a certain interpretative power which moves people and charms them. She explains thus:

"A parrot can be taught to say a sentence, but it speaks without meaning or expression. Similarly, some persons labor for days in their endeavors to learn intricate dancing steps and when they have learned their work they strive to impress the public, but without success. Why? Because they lack soul. Because they don't analyze themselves, and they don't analyze the character of their audience. Great authors always study their audience and great artists and sculptors study the public. A great dancer should do the same, because dancing, more than any other art, concerns itself with the influence of motion and emotion and the mutual interplay of rhythm, music and personality."

### 'Way Down South' in Motion Picture Play

Murray Garrison has purchased the picture, play and book rights to the original story "Way Down South," paying \$25,000 for the same to the authors, Harry F. Davis and Adelaide Leitbach. Miss Leitbach, who wrote "The Night Call," which was seen on Broadway last season and which soon is to appear in London, now is writing the story in scenario form and it will be put into an eight-reel film production by Garrison as soon as completed. The picture will show some of the Southern life with some sidelights on the real Southern dandy as he is today on the old plantations far away from the ordinary route of travel.

### AMUSEMENTS.

#### BETTER TIMES ARE HERE TO STAY

AT THE RIVOLI. Music by RAYMOND HUBBELL.

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### Here's a Sea Going Motion Picture Studio

A sea going motion picture studio will be used in making Glenn Hunter's new satire on the idle rich, "The Lap of Luxury," when the film Guild cast and staff make nightly cruises off the Connecticut coast next week in a specially equipped schooner. To make possible the photographing of night scenes at sea, a miniature lighting system has been installed aboard the vessel, together with a laboratory for developing short tests. Martha Mansfield is the heroine of the story, Townsend Martin author. Frank Tuttle director, Fred Waller technical director and Dwight Wiman the villain.

### SEE COLLECTS COUNTERFEITS.

Miss Louise Allen of "The Gingham Girl" at the Earl Carroll Theater has an odd hobby—counterfeit coin collecting. "People have no idea," says Miss Allen, "of the fascination of dealing with first hand counterfeit material. There is something positively pathetic about it. Coins of false mintage are worth while. Besides, they are far more difficult to find. If they happen to be American made the Federal authorities usually ferret them out before any one else can get them. "In Europe, however, they are plentiful, especially in France and Italy. In appearance the coins are much more interesting there, for they vary greatly in size and appearance. Chinese coins, however, are the oddest. "Some of the coins I own have been reduced or enlarged in size by the use of acids."

### Russia Makes Overtures To Get American Movies

The Talmadge sisters, accompanied by their mother, and Joseph M. Schenck, are on their way to Paris on the steamship Majestic. They will spend a month in Paris sightseeing and buying the latest gowns. After that they will spend a couple of weeks in Germany, where a representative of the Soviet Government will meet Mr. Schenck in order to discuss with him an offer to produce pictures in Russia. Norma and Constance will accompany Mr. Schenck and the Soviet Government representative to Russia.

The offer of the Russian Government to finance a picture proposition to the extent of putting up 50 per cent. of the cash required is not made to any one man or one company, but to the cinema industry as represented in the Will Hays organization. Joseph M. Schenck

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is sent on the mission because he speaks Russian fluently. Not only has the Soviet Government agreed to produce motion pictures in Russia, but it is desirous of bringing in some of the American motion pictures for release in the Russian theaters. The market for American films has been practically cut off since the war.

### NEW MUSIC HALL SOON.

The Minsky Brothers have come up from the East Side, where they have been conducting the National Winter Garden, to Brighton up Broadway with their own particular type of burlesques at the Park Music Hall, which not so long ago as the Park Theater held the hitting operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan.

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